

## EPISODE 7 – INVITATIONS



### The CHOSEN Discussion Guide

Watch - Discuss - Learn - Rejoice

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

<sup>10</sup> While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples.

<sup>11</sup> When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

<sup>12</sup> On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>13</sup> But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." -Mt 9:9-13

### Watch

This episode opens with a depiction of Moses and Joshua. It takes place during the time God struck the Israelites with venomous serpents and provided an unexpected solution which required faith (Nu 21:4-9). The main episode conveys fictional events leading to the meeting between Jesus and Nicodemus and fictional events leading up the Matthews' call to be a disciple (Mt 9:9-13). It focuses on God's gracious invitation, which receives different reactions from different people.

### Discuss

- 1) Nicodemus is portrayed as wanting to learn more about Jesus before leaving Capernaum. His fictional wife, Zahorah, cares nothing about that. Contrast her concerns with her husbands' concerns. Based on your experiences is this a realistic family dynamic?
- 2) Roman Praetor Quintas, a fictional character, tells Nicodemus, "Preachers have a habit of becoming politicians." Does this concern ring true today?
- 3) Was Jesus ever under any serious scrutiny of the Roman officers and rulers? (see John 18:35)
- 4) It is plausible Nicodemus was on a mission to report to the Sanhedrin or the Romans about Jesus. But more likely he had his own reasons for digging deeper. Compare with John 11:45-48 and evaluate if Roman interests were really a concern for those investigating Jesus.
- 5) The dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus can be found in John 3. This episode paraphrases the dialogue and directly quotes from Scripture. Rate how well it conveys the truths of Scripture.
- 6) This episode adds some historical fiction, namely, Nicodemus confessing his faith and Jesus inviting him to be a disciple. Nicodemus then hesitates to leave it all to follow him. (Compare with John 7:50-52; 19:38-42). What things would have made it hard for a Pharisee to follow Jesus.

## Learn

- a) Share the various reasons people in this episode want to learn more about Jesus. What are some reasons people today might want to inquire and learning more about Jesus?
- b) Discuss why many people, like Nicodemus are hesitant or remain "closet disciples" of Jesus. Explain why they cannot remain in the dark for long.
- c) Matthew's rejection of the faith broke apart his family. Share how it feels when one family member has rejected the faith for riches or other pursuits. How should Christians respond?
- d) Read the fictional quote by Nicodemus at the bottom of the page. Explain how this quote is biblically accurate when it comes to both sin and grace.
- e) Nicodemus is presented as quoting from Psalm 2:11-12. Read it and apply it to Christ.
- f) Read John 12:37-43 to find God's evaluation of those who have faith in Jesus but shy from publicly confessing it.
- g) Peter is presented as upset and confused that Jesus would call Matthew to be his disciple. Explain why it should startle us that anyone is called and chosen by God.
- h) Matthew's Roman guard is confused at the way Matthew left his booth to follow Jesus. Explain what makes the gospel invitation so startling and compelling.

## Rejoice

- 1) Both Matthew and Nicodemus were struggling to figure out what faith in Jesus meant. Read Matthew 12:20-21 regarding how God handles an immature or weak level of faith.
- 2) Jesus made often made plans while on the road. Share some biblical examples. This episode hints at Jesus having a plan to stay at Matthew's house ahead of time. Evaluate this interpretation of events and discuss what it would convey about grace and how God brings salvation to sinners.
- 3) Jesus reached out to Nicodemus. Jesus reached out to Matthew. God in grace chooses us and invites us to be his own. Share some ways you've been invited to experience God's grace in Christ and how you can be part of his plan to extend the invitation.

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*Nicodemus "There are many things that we are drawn to without our thinking or our ability to say why."*

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